Letters from Parvus to Axelrod (January 1904)

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85. PARVUS-P. B. AXELROD. [Early January 1904]

Dear Pavel Borisovich!

I read with pleasure your article in the latest issue of Iskra (433). You have exposed a sore spot in the policy of Social Democracy in Russia. The struggle against autocracy demands the unification of all opposition elements and the concentration of the Social Democratic Party on immediate political effect.

The Petersburgers of social revolution demand, until the party has grown, the class differentiation of the proletariat. This is an objective contradiction that can only be resolved by reality, by the overthrow of autocracy. Until then, the party's tactics will fluctuate back and forth. However, through conscious action, we can reduce the amplitude of these fluctuations. And even if this were not successful, we can at least, with intelligence and knowledge, prevent narrow-mindedness and ignorance from rocking the party left and right.

An analogy can be found in German social democracy: the contradiction between the parliamentary tasks of a large, and at present, perhaps the only, opposition party and the social-revolutionary tasks of the proletariat.

Another analogy, in this regard, suggests itself. Social Democracy in Germany grew so rapidly and powerfully because the German proletariat was politically ahead of the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois parties in Germany were only just beginning to emerge when proletarian socialism emerged: it delayed their development and developed at their expense. And hence, incidentally, it turned out that the German proletariat, fighting against the bourgeoisie, finds itself burdened by its political debts. The Russian proletariat is emerging at an even more favorable historical moment. In Russia, there are as yet no political parties other than Social Democracy. Marx's prophecy regarding the German proletariat, which has been so beautifully fulfilled, we therefore have the right to apply it to Russia to an even greater degree. The question boils down to whether Russian Social Democracy will be equal to its task of taking advantage of the great historical moment, creating a class organization of the proletariat and placing this organization at the head of political liberalism.

It is necessary to subordinate liberalism to socialism and avoid those political shackles in which the French proletariat is still struggling - the subordination of social-revolutionary interests to the idea of political democracy.

Your article demonstrates that Russian Social Democracy is on the right path to resolving this problem. Your article appears at a time when many will misunderstand it, making its historical significance all the greater. I was particularly pleased by the liveliness and vivacity that your article exudes. In places, it attains extraordinary beauty and inspirational power. This shows me that your health has improved. I hope that you will finally overcome your neurasthenia, and I expect this to be a great support for indigenous socialism.

I shake hands devoted to you

Warmest greetings to your family.

Parvus. [In Latin script, not Cyrillic, despite the rest of the letter being in Cyrillic]

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86. PARVUS - TO P. B. AXELROD. (Munich 18.1.04).

Dear Pavel Borisovich!

The contradiction between the general positional and social-revolutionary tasks of German Social Democracy is, of course, not theoretical. There is also no theoretical contradiction between the tasks of fighting autocracy and the social-revolutionary organization of the Russian proletariat—this contradiction is practical. Nine-tenths of the parliamentary activity of German Social Democracy boils down to democratic opposition—the struggle against taxes, militarism, and the like. I know, and have written many times, that the proletariat, in its political struggle, cannot stand outside the general life of the state, but must penetrate into all its nooks and crannies and inflict them with the contradiction of its class interests. But in practice, the parliamentary opposition of Social Democracy easily veers into bourgeois democracy. Only those like Bebel are able to elucidate every political question from a social democratic perspective, while the rest, on questions of general democracy, repeat the arguments of general democracy. With the growth of the tasks of democratic opposition falling to the lot of German Social Democracy, it even became possible for people for whom everything boils down to this opposition to play a role in the party. The political initiative of the proletariat suffers, for example, on the question of the eight-hour day. Even the question of organizing the masses is sidelined by the tasks of factional influence. Furthermore, since democratic unity is always national, Social Democracy, as the democratic opposition grows, unwittingly finds itself increasingly on a purely national footing. And so on and so forth.

I am writing this to keep you from praising German social democracy too much, which, of course, in the overall result succeeds to combine democratic opposition with class struggle, but only after significant hesitation and hesitation, and with the strong participation of conscious critical work. So much the better for you, since it justifies the need for self-criticism for Russian Social Democracy as well. It's ridiculous, admittedly, to even discuss the usefulness of critical thinking, but unfortunately, even the most revolutionary of revolutionaries doesn't always understand this.

In your "fussing around" with the party's "internal enemy," I hope to be of assistance to you. I certainly don't intend to get involved in the details of your organizational disputes, but I am preparing a book on the tasks of social democracy in Russia. I am particularly interested in elucidating the state idea of the Russian autocracy, the paths and consequences of its policies, and then determining the character of the emerging political parties of Russia based on their existing beginnings and how they were historically formed—I hope that against this backdrop I will be able to shed more light on the general tasks of our party 435). It is strange, personally, with all the attention to your activities and precisely because of this, I have to wish you sleep 436)!

I shake hands

Your Parvus.

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Letters from Parvus to Potresov (1904)

87. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. [Early February 1904]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

I'll write and send it by the end of the week. 437). I'm going to Geneva. I'd like to talk to you and others. We are on the brink of revolution in Russia and, by all appearances, on the threshold of great events in the West. Political developments will probably accelerate. I have all sorts of plans.

I'd like to know what you're up to and what the party's situation is in Russia. I was still hesitating about going, as I'm up to my neck in work. In any case, my arrival in Geneva must be kept under the strictest secrecy. Apart from you, Martov, Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, and perhaps Lenin, I don't think I'll see anyone else from Iskra.

Please tell Axelrod that I was planning to offer my brochure 438) first of all to Iskra. I am not writing to him due to lack of time. Ryazanov's brochure has been sent to him 439).

By the way! At the congress, Martov twice contrasted Ryazanov with himself, as a man without comradely solidarity, capable of committing an act that Martov himself would consider "a stain on his political reputation." At the League congress, Martov retracted this insult to Ryazanov. It is, in fact, unfounded; I can personally testify that it directly contradicts reality. And in that case, justice demands that a note be added to the minutes of the congress interpreting the aforementioned insult. It's enough that Martov could go so far—so it's necessary at least have enough self-esteem to smooth over the injustice and insult committed. According to the conditions for the distribution of Russian illegal literature, dementi (Refutations) in the league protocol is not enough 140).

Furthermore, I am asked to inform that Iskra should no longer be sent to Odessa, to the address Bolgarskaya, Lyanda.

Sending friendly greetings.

Yours, Parvus.

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88. PARVUS - A. P. POTRESOV. [End of February 1904]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Have you read Struve's leaflet? It unites opposition elements (441), while our Central Committee and Central Organ are disorganizing social democracy. Our tactics, Of course, are different from the liberal bourgeoisie. We need to sharpen and drive forward. But until now we have had the leadership of revolutionary youth, and this could slip away from us if, at this critical moment, we are preoccupied with internal strife while the liberals act. But this is only the beginning. If a breakthrough occurs, the

liberals will become bolder and will be more likely to win the sympathies of the youth. And what will happen? Practical work is approaching from all sides; the time is approaching when Russian Social Democracy will have to reckon with real political parties. And all the organizational work done so far under appalling conditions is going down the drain because people who consider themselves political figures cannot subordinate tactical differences to the urgent needs of the historical moment, cannot rise above formalities and wounded pride.

By Parvus.

Yuli Osipovich (Martov) promised to write to Ryazanov, but this time too, no letter came. This whole thing needs to be settled, finally. And the deeply personal insult to Ryazanov at the congress needs to be revived in Iskra. Or are you absolutely determined to widen the scandal and spread it to a place that could only discredit Yuli Osipovich?

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89. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. (February 29 1904)

Munich, 29.2.1904.

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

You're mistaken in assuming that the Central Committee is inactive. You only know about its relations with the Menshevik committees, and what's going on beyond those borders is obviously something you know little about. By all appearances, the Central Committee is preparing a congress with great haste. This congress will be in Russia. Very soon. And Lenin will be at the congress.

Judging by everything, this will be a cleaned-up congress, i.e. a congress of the majority. On the other hand, you are reporting a demonstration by the minority. The result is clear to any somewhat experienced politician: A complete split, two parties, geographically divided at that: the South and Great Russia. And the moment is revolutionary. Just think what this means: There will be disputes about who owns the central organ, the printing house, etc. Most will openly boycott your press. Competition between organizations will begin. Your forces are insufficient even for the South, but you will have to use them to conquer all of Russia. And around all this there will be an atmosphere of mutual hostility, slander, etc. And all this at a time of the collapse of autocracy.

And here you're surprised that your internal polemics and your Genevan undermining haven't dissuaded me from the necessity of ending the turmoil at all costs. Otherwise, I'd have to not only delve into the intricacies of your squabbles—of all I've written, essentially, only Axelrod's articles are of any serious, fundamental interest—but above all, I'd have to forget the entire history of German Social Democracy and the labor movement in general.

You ask, where is the practical solution? Here it is: you must co-opt Lenin onto the editorial board even if you were unable to immediately get representatives of the minority onto the Central Committee... By co-opting Lenin, you will be all the more successful in agitating—and you can do this openly in the Central Organ—in favor of replenishing the Central Committee. The disagreements lie within the Party. You want Party unity. For this, you invite Lenin to the editorial board. For this, minority representation on the Central Committee is also necessary. And Vanya's arguments about the impossibility of working

together boil down, you must admit, to personalities. That's what I'm saying: we must rise above personalities and formalities. Leninism isn't limited to Lenin alone; it's also present in all of you, and it boils down to ignoring the influence of "spontaneous" political developments on the Party, to overestimating the beneficial and harmful influence of individuals. You keep thinking that you are making progress, but in the meantime, you are only a cook at the historical pot and do not even have time to skim off a pinch of broth in time, and now you are fighting among yourselves and are ready to spill the historical scum that you have long been calling on all of Russia to sip.

I am extremely glad that Struve's response will be written by you, Alexander Nikolaevich). Just don't delay 1442).

By the way, Iskra must definitely respond to the sessions of the Prussian Landtag and Reichstag in the next issue. I draw attention to the concluding words of Minster Schönstedt's speech on Saturday, which, among other things, coincided with the concluding words of my "W[elt] P[olitik]", written on the same day. Perhaps Plekhanov will write 443)?

Shaking hands with
Parvus

I haven't received Iskra yet. I'm preparing an article, etc. 44). I'm waiting for the proofreading of the sheet.

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90. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. (March 1904)

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

1 March 1904.

General Stessel's order: "No way out! The sea is on three sides, and the enemy on the fourth" proves that the Japanese managed to cut off the connection between Port Arthur and the Russian army. This was foreseen by the "Alter Preussischer Offizier" 445). In that case, the days of Port Arthur read. • This will be a terrible blow for the government. "These are terrible blows"). And what about Russian social-democracy?

Quo usque tandem 448)!

The Prussian-German government must respond immediately. Just remember that you are writing a historical document. The main thing is to do so with a sense of strength and dignity.

I didn’t receive any “Iskra” or proofreading!!!

I shake hands

Parvus.

I received your telegram and just received your express letter. I'm waiting for Iskra. I'll send the article tomorrow evening.

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91. PARVUS - A. P. POTRESOV. (March 4, 1904.)

Lorogoy Alexander) Nikolaevich!

Alas! The article is once again becoming "enormously long." Moreover, it was delayed by the late delivery of Iskra and the fact that I have a ton of other things to do here that constantly distract me from my work.

I'm interrupting my work now; three columns have been written, and there will be two more [because] I have to write Weltpolitik. All I can do is start tomorrow, if I have time from Weltpolitik, and then work on the article again on Sunday. [This is a mistranslation.] On Sunday, with the lunchtime mail, so that it will be in Geneva on Monday morning, I'll publish the bulk of the article, so that it will last for a day of typesetting, and then finish it on Monday. Take this into account. It can't be divided. I don't mind if you publish an issue without more articles.

Ryazanov gave me—since he had no address—a letter for the editor. I am enclosing this message in a special envelope. I consider his demand that Iskra publish a statement agreeing to collaborate while maintaining his own position on controversial issues to be entirely justified. He was subjected to such harsh attacks both in Iskra and at the congress that silent collaboration would undoubtedly have been interpreted very unfavorably.
Apart from the question of collaboration, his personal conflict with Martov still needs to be resolved. I am personally involved in this matter. I conducted the final negotiations regarding collaboration between him and the editorial board; I myself worked unsuccessfully for a year to force him to collaborate privately, without any communication with others, and can therefore personally testify that he behaved precisely the opposite of what Martov publicly, and in such an offensive manner, accused him of. I consider it my honorable duty to remove this stain from him, especially since, through lengthy efforts, I have now convinced him to agree to collaboration—a fact which, in the eyes of the public, may seem to confirm the truth of the accusation hurled at him that he is pursuing personal goals. I believe the most reasonable course of action is for Martov to briefly retract his offensive remarks at the congress in Iskra. I repeat that I am making this demand not on behalf of Ryazanov, but on my own behalf. From Rizanov: I promise not to touch on this incident at all in my brochure, since the Iskra publication will feature the incident. His brochure, in this case, according to him, will be completely free of personal content.

Let me know if you received my letter in which I wrote about Lenin's plans. I'm afraid it might fall into the wrong hands.

I shake hands

Parvus,

When should we expect you in Munich?

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92. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. [March 5, 1904.]

Alexander] Nikolaevich]!

In a week, all the correspondence on Prussian police matters will be covered in snow, washed away by the rain, no one will think about it anymore - what about the Iskra article then? After all, it should have appeared two weeks ago! After all, such an article could certainly have been written in two days. Why did it stop? Then, you say: "about Bolov's speeches, etc.", etc., - - 1 pet, there should be an article about Russian social democracy and the German government. "We know that by fighting against autocracy, we are arming all governments of capitalist states against ourselves" - that's how it should begin. Wait two days and publish a reply to the German Reich Chancellor from leading members of the Russian "provisional government" 448). I write for Weltpolitik about Russian finances. I'll send the proofs; maybe they'll be useful to Iskra 449).

I sent a letter yesterday. I hope that the affaire Riasanoff on the stated grounds will be settled 450).

You know the state of affairs in Russia better than anyone, but I'm afraid you're underestimating the conspiratorial activities of the Central Committee and Leipzig. From conversations with you all, I'm convinced that you yourselves waver between extreme optimism and equally pessimistic views about the influence of the Central Committee and Leipzig in Russia.

The logical conclusion of your arguments in your last letter is that you should officially co-opt Lenin. If he refuses, you'll only gain a new and powerful trump card. If he refuses, it will become clear to everyone that restoring the old editorial board is no longer an option. For me personally, this would be a decisive step, one that would force me to abandon the unification plans and openly support the minority. Nota bene: co-optation without any reservations.

Baur

Parvus,

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95. PARVUS - A.I. POTRESOV. [Beginning of March 1904]

Dear Alexander Pikolaevich!

I absolutely must keep up with the proofreading myself, otherwise there will be confusion (451). It seems I forgot to cross out something in the manuscript sent this morning. There will be another 10 pages of the manuscript. I characterize the administrative disorganization, the financial breakdown, and I will trace everything back to its root causes. The final formula: The autocracy wanted to take advantage of the military organization of capitalist states, but ignored the economic and political development that resulted in the militaristic capitalist state. And so, when it was put to the test, the entire military edifice was found to be without a foundation. Its failure reflected the failure of the entire political system. It turned out, as during the Crimean campaign, that in order to strengthen the state's military assets, it needed to be reorganized politically.

Hello.

Parvus,

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94. PARVUS - A.I. POTRESOV. (March 19, 1904)

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

I received the letter, I am enclosing the proofs. I am eager for proofs of the first part of my article. Please send me a proof copy of the editorial immediately by express. I just received it by express-COM - thank you! I will do everything possible In my manuscript, not only is the pumerovka mixed up, but it seems there are one or two places that I forgot to cross out - I will do this in the proofreading.

After receiving news of Iskra's release, I took a break, and it did me good. You have no idea how interrupted I am at every turn here.

I shake hands

Parvus.

I quickly glanced at March's editorial (452). It's delightful. I suggest deleting the words "lackey" and "principally" in the second paragraph. The press will seize on them as a formal insult. After all, this is a diplomatic document. Reply by telegram.

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95. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. [March 13, 1904.]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

[March 13, 1904.]

I received a letter from Bebel full of complaints. The open propaganda of violent revolution on the part of Russian Socialist Democracy, of course, violates all German parliamentary tactics. There's nothing to be done about it, of course. I wrote him a letter to that effect. However, we must not forget that the German government is only looking for a pretext to accuse Social Democracy of preparing a violent coup and thereby justify the introduction of political repression. Therefore, the Iskra editorial board must strive to avoid anything that might provide the German government with a formal basis for citing it in support of the false accusations it is leveling against German Social Democracy. Even before receiving Bebel's letter, I telegraphed you about a passage in Iskra's latest editorial that I feared might be used for this purpose. I still published the translation on BW[elt]p[olitik], and sent separate copies to the editors. However, I advise against sending it to bourgeois newspapers.

Bebel, by the way, is threatening to change the party's tactics toward Russian Social Democracy. This is worth keeping in mind. I'm not sending the letter itself because it concerns me personally.

Towards the end of last week, I was overcome by a nasty case of flu, with coughing, sneezing, and all the other delights. I had to pause work. I'll finish tomorrow.

I received the proof.

About Ryazanov! The Iskra editorial board is demanding that he publicly acknowledge the program he criticized and intends to continue criticizing. I can't understand why this is necessary. If you continue to adhere to this point of view, you will have to be accepted into the party.

Bernstein, who approved the program, should be excluded from it, as I am resolutely opposed to swaying the "more or less" and obscuring the historical view of class development with a "semi-proletarian" point of view, and am least of all prepared to agree to the opportunistic tactics of "cut-offs." For heaven's sake, abandon this bureaucratic formalism. You know as well as I do that Ryazanov is a Social Democrat. You want his cooperation, fine—if not, then no. And at least leave the formalism to the Central Committee. I suggest that you and Ryazanov set aside the issue of recognizing the program until the party's organizational squabbles are resolved.

I shake hands.

By Parvus.

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96. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. [23 Mar (19)01]

23 Mar (19)01.

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

I'll be heading to Berlin tomorrow evening. I'll be staying at the Habsburger Hof opposite the Anhalter Bahnhof under my own name. I might end up staying until the day after tomorrow, but that's unlikely. So, goodbye in Berlin.

I'm enclosing Rizanov's statement in a new version, tailored to your editorial demands. I hope this concludes the negotiations.

I would gladly go to Geneva again, but business is getting in the way. I am looking forward to a personal meeting in Berlin, where I will stay for several days, maybe a week, or in Munich.

Жмурудруку Bam Parvus.

Ryazanov just received a letter from the editorial office - since the attached statement settles everything, so the answer has been given, and he will write about the practical issues of cooperation himself.

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97. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. (April 15 1904)

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Munich, 15 April [19]04.

For me, the question is whether you have the right to leave the editorial board, leaving the central organ to its fate. 184) The party charter does not provide for speeches by members of the editorial board.

Does this mean that anyone, for any personal reason or without reason, can leave the editorial board at any time? After all, editorship gives not only rights, but also obligations, because it is a kind of mini- Is it really possible to allow those appointed to a position to wander off at their own discretion? The rule of democracy is not to refuse public office. But even worse is to abandon a position once accepted. Even a minister in the civil service cannot resign voluntarily; he must ask for his resignation. After all, any position requires adaptation, and the more serious the matter, the more difficult it is to find a suitable replacement—that's why an official is bound by his position. Even in private enterprises, a Kündigungsfrist is established because "). Never will a member of the German Parteivorstand "") leave his post before the appointed time. In the editorial offices of the local Social Democratic newspapers, the situation is somewhat different due to the fact that the party has a relatively large reserve of writers, but still, no one will leave the editorial board suddenly, and if the entire board of editors from Vorwärts decided to resign at once, their doubts would be held accountable before the Parteitag. In view of this, I cannot allow that the congress, without stipulating the mode of speech of the members of the editorial board, thereby frees them from all obligations to the organ whose fate it has entrusted to them. Do not forget that Russian Social Democracy, moreover, in view of the secrecy of the organization, is incomparably more dependent than the socialist parties of other countries on the persons it places at the head of its institutions. It has established such strict procedure for the selection of persons, especially the serious obligation of its representatives in various party institutions to remain in their posts.

It seems to me that you all look at the party as a subordinate mass, but you have no sense of responsibility to the party.

What's this all about! He stretches in his editorial chair, mutters, "My lord, I don't like your style," or, "You smoke bad cigarettes, I can't stand tobacco smoke—ergo, I'm leaving the editorial office." He leaves in the pose of Popryshkin, imagining himself an Algerian bey, and the editorial staff crowds behind him to the door, and in the place of his majestic deeds there remains only a pile of waste paper.

And in Russia, they expect political direction, historical perspectives, propaganda, agitation, and organization from the Central Organ! In Russia, Japanese guns are thundering, autocracy is crumbling, political parties are forming, the critical moment of the struggle for political power is approaching, and yet the editorial board of the Central Organ of Russian Social Democracy is scattering, unable to agree on matters of literary style!

By granting the editorial board the right of co-optation, the congress was obviously convinced that it had ensured its existence until the next congress. Remaining in your post until the next congress, in my opinion, is your direct responsibility.

According to the party's statutes, a congress may not take place earlier than one year after the last congress. Note 1 to § 3 of the Statutes states:

“Only those organizations that are approved no later than one year before the congress shall have the right of representation.”

Before the last congress there were no “approved” organizations, therefore, before the expiration of a year from the last congress there cannot be a single organization that would correspond to the conditions of the cited resolution and the congress cannot take place.

I don't know exactly when the last congress was. In any case, at least six months have passed since then. You will therefore only have to endure for a few more months.

You must do this. The Central Committee is apparently paralyzed. By leaving the editorial board, you will also paralyze the Central Organ. What remains of the party as a centralized organization?

Stay, that's my opinion! I consider it positively necessary in the interests of social democracy,

Devoted to you

Parvus.

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98. PARVUS - A. P. POTRESOV. (Spring 1904)

Dear friend Alexander Pikolaevich!

Be patient! Anything will happen, you'll be satisfied. First of all, an article on liberalism as a continuation of "Autocracy and Revolution." Much of what I intend to say about the disagreements will become clearer, more understandable to the average public, when I characterize the bourgeoisie's attitude toward the revolution. The difference between our tasks and those of liberalism will become apparent. The distinctiveness of the proletariat's class policy, accepted as dogma, will acquire concrete content on the basis of the current political struggle. Then they will also understand what proletarian initiative is and the essence of organizational capabilities pon 433). I could force myself to write faster, but I shouldn't. It's better not to force myself.

What are you saying? I'm not going to Leipzig. I should go there to make personal connections with the kingpins at Leipziger Messe), but I'm not in the mood. It's a shame, really, because it's interesting from a social psychology perspective. But I don't feel like it. I prefer to think, dream, read, and write.

I'll be staying in Munich until about May 10th or 15th. Would you like to come?

I shake hands.

Parvus.

[Page 123]

104. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. (26 May 1904)

München, 26 May 1904.

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

All sorts of commercial affairs and concerns have come upon me 480). I don't have enough capital, I need another three thousand, but there's nowhere to get it. I had to

I'll go to Berlin again. It'll be very tough until autumn, when money starts flowing in from the theatres again. This means a lot of trouble. And I'm not at all up for it right now. I'm in a period of conceptualising general ideas, when I want to detach myself from everything around me, to go far and wide, to open up broad perspectives to my mental gaze. I want to once again take in the historical process in its great currents and determine its immediate political combinations. For me, this comes down to a personal question: will I throw myself once again and for all into journalism, or will I take up the production of a large work covering the most important economic and cultural problems of the social revolution. At the same time, in view of my relationship with... 181), I have to draw up a balance of my personal existence. I've achieved the clarity of mind necessary for all this; I feel a surge of fresh ideas and renewed energy, but there's no peace, no leisure; a mass of trifles and troubles distracts and clutters my mind. I eagerly await Saturday every week, when I shake off the dust of both the city and life and head off into the mountains—alone! I regret that you're not here. People who can think impartially and feel sincerely are extremely rare. Generally, they're hypocritical to themselves, trying to color their feelings and thoughts to fit some kind of life template, often adopted from who knows where.

That's the explanation for my silence. Now write, or better yet, come here: I'll be staying in Munich for a long time. The situation is such that my presence in the office is necessary every day.

Shaking hands with

Parvus.

Kautsky told me about Mandelstam's article and his letter to him, a copy of which he sent you. I was waiting to hear from you about this.

It would be good if Plekhanov responded to Lenin. So far, I've only read the preface and the passage about Sobakevich-Parvus (182), which Ryazanov drew my attention to. This reference will be very useful.

111. PARVUS - A. N. POTRESOV. 11 May 1904

Munich, 11 May 1904

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Regarding Ilnitsky's attentat in Berz, it would not be a bad idea to state—for example, by letter, or better yet, by telegram to Vorwärts—that he had nothing in common with the Russian revolutionaries. The local press—the M[ünchener] A[llgemeine] Z[eitung]—is, of course, trying to use the attentat against the Russian socialists (456a).

I've sent the article for translation; it will probably be ready today. I'm busy with work, but I'll send the continuation of my articles soon (457).

What kind of nonsense did the editors write to Ryazanov regarding his agrarian article? What "point of view" do you disagree with there? He insists that you, Plekhanov, and Martov fully approved of the article, only disagreeing with the attack on Lenin in footnote 458.

Warm regards

I shake hands.

Parvus

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123. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. August 8, 1904

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

August 8, 1904

Mehring is in Switzerland and will be in Geneva in the middle of this month. He would like to see Gurevich. Let me know immediately if Gurevich will be in Geneva by then. In general, one of you should see Mehring in Geneva - you can recruit the Leipz[ger] Volkszeitung to your advantage through him. Are you going to Amsterdam? Otherwise, it would be best for you to meet him.

So, respond immediately. I'll write to Mehring for my part. If necessary, I'll send a letter of introduction to anyone in Geneva, as you direct. Give Mehring the address, so he doesn't have to search for Gurevich in vain.

Hello

Parvus.

124. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. (Mid-August 1904)

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

I sent you a telegram to put you in touch with Mering. I also telegrammed him your address.

As the summer heat subsided, my lethargy also subsided. Thanks to this circumstance, I gave a new impetus to my commercial undertakings and eagerly set about finishing my Russian articles. Unfortunately, I'm currently very busy, as Mu 511 has left for Amsterdam. If I don't finish my articles by his arrival, I'll give up publishing for a couple of weeks and come to you, not in Geneva, but somewhere in the mountains nearby. There I'll complete my series of articles and see what I can do to undertake further work for the benefit of the All-Russian kladerdach, 512) What are you and Katerina] Nikolaevna] [Potresova]?

Shake hands.

Parvus

Heartfelt greetings to [Trotsky ?] and others.

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125. PARVUS. N. POTRESOV 513). (Late August 1904]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Lenin has arrived and is waiting for me at his place. So I'll go to the meeting myself. If I don't make it, please tell Sofya Samoilova (515), the lady you met, that she can find me at the hotel tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Shake hands. Parvus.

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126. PARVUS - A.I. POTRESOV. [September 1904)

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Trotsky developed his plans for a popular newspaper to me in Geneva (310), I was very pleased with his intentions, since I remember that the central organ that must resolve complex political and tactical issues cannot be fully popular, either in form or content, and leaflets alone are also insufficient given the growing political consciousness of workers. I consider Trotsky, whose literary talent and political inquisitiveness I generally value highly, to be the right man for such an organ. True, he writes in an overly intellectual style, but he writes clearly, intelligibly, and not without fire, and popular agitators have yet to emerge from our literary establishment. I also agreed with Trotsky that this organ should have its own editorial board. No doubt about it! A small editorial board—three people, in my opinion, is quite sufficient—subordinated solely to general party institutions. But this is precisely what Trotsky says they fear. They fear the workers' newspaper's deviation from the direction of the central organ and would therefore like the Central Organ to coordinate it. But the Central Organ cannot control the entire literary ranks of the Party. A tendency that strongly veers toward Leninism. It grew out of the soil of

conspiratorial organizations. Apply it to the conditions of the social democratic movement, and you will see its monstrosity. Is it possible, for example, to propose to German social democracy that Vorwärts take control of the provincial press or that Neue Zeit command Vorwärts? Of course, Russia is not Germany—but your task is to apply the general policy and tactics of the socialist workers' movement to specific Russian conditions, and not, on the basis of specific Russian conditions, to create a special kind of social democracy, different from its hitherto established historical character. Your problem is not at all that you do not yet have everything under your control—Yuzhny Rabochy, however, has been abandoned—but that you

You are too absolute masters of Russian social democracy. There is no one to control you, no mass control! That's why the party operates like a machine without a regulator, a motor without a flywheel.

The point is not to eliminate harmful or inconvenient trends, but to overcome them, to rise above them, to absorb them, to lead the party without them, to guide the party in the right direction, despite the confusion, hesitation, and instability of views. The ego in general.

Imagine the difference between the tasks of a central organ and those of a workers' newspaper. A whole range of facts will be included in a workers' newspaper, which should be excluded from the central organ. For example, with reports of oppression in factories, etc.—highly agitational material, which, unfortunately, disappeared with the disappearance of the Rabochy Delovites. But that would be nothing. Many things must be written about in a workers' newspaper in essence differently than for a central organ. Let's take, for example, the Italian general assembly. For the central organ, a political assessment of an event is important, while for a workers' newspaper, above all, a description of the course of events—or the attitude toward government policy. The central organ criticizes the cause, force, and consequences of this policy, while the workers' newspaper reveals its character. A workers' newspaper would be very bad if it only popularized Iskra. The point is not a change in style, but a difference in content. How can we unite the editorial boards here?! Trotsky told me that he wanted to set out his views on the tasks and organization of a workers' newspaper in print (517). I replied that I would consider it very tactless to launch a polemic against the editorial board of the Central Organ at the present time—for exactly the same reasons that you cite in your letter. But, of course, this does not mean that we should stifle every thought that runs counter to the opinion of the editorial board. This would lead to stagnation, and God knows what. I advised him to write, avoiding any attacks and insinuations, in the form of a proposal for the further development of the practical activity of the Party. How and what he wrote, I do not know. Today I will talk with him, and at the same time I will try to understand the reasons for his non-writing for Iskra. I have not spoken to him about this until now, assuming that his inactivity is forced. From your letter I see otherwise. I spoke with Trotsky.

I'll start where I left off regarding his collaboration with Iskra. Essentially, I understood him to mean that after the incident with Plekhanov, he considered it more tactful to somewhat limit his collaboration in order to ease the editorial board's situation. He acknowledges that the editorial board defended its rights and his position at the newspaper with great dignity, and not because of his relationship with the editorial board, but because of the relationship established between the editorial board and Plekhanov, he considered it more prudent to step away from the newspaper for a while. 18 However, he wrote, continues to write, and will continue to write.

The question of the popular newspaper was only a special case, which revealed the difference of views between him and the editors, which in fact is more profound. It boils down, as far as I understand it—I haven't read his book yet—to the question of the party's immediate tactics and to the critical

The editorial board's handling of affairs. Regarding tactics, he believes that the main focus should now be on uniting forces, whereas until now, for well-known reasons created by the congress, they have been primarily concerned with distinguishing tactical nuances. He's right, but to what extent he differs from the editorial board, I cannot judge due to a lack of information. In my eyes, all discussions of tactics were painted in the same gray shade. In the conduct of editorial affairs, he sees excessive intolerance toward anyone who deviates from the editorial viewpoint. Here he is absolutely right. The case with Ryazanov (519) speaks entirely in his favor. What does this mean: criticism of the program is untimely? The program exists to be criticized. A program is only good when it can withstand any criticism at any moment. A program is an armor that repels all blows, but you want to hide from your own army the holes in the armor and where they are. The program needs to be released to the broadest possible public; the more it's criticized, the more it wins. It's the daily bread of propaganda, but you're treating the program like a Jew would treat the Holy Scriptures, wrapping it in layers and hiding it under an iron lock. When is criticism timely? Isn't it really up to those being criticized to decide? Do you think criticism of the agrarian program will be timely when it has to be put into practice? Wouldn't it be better to do it sooner?

At the root of editorial intolerance lies a fear of opportunism. This was already evident in the manifesto on the publication of Iskra, it confused Lenin, and it still lingers within you. And you fought economism with a kind of courageous despair. You lack sufficient confidence, a passion for the idea of social-revolutionary development. After all, Marxism is only the ideological expression of the historical process. That's why it colors everything in its own color. That's why idealists see it as a predator that tramples everything. But you yourselves feel like some kind of carp of orthodoxy, who see in every small fish that emerges from the ideological depths of the socialist movement a pike ready to swallow them. Look at the river during the flood, what it carries with it: debris, rubbish, earthen masses, but the ice floes are crumbling and dozens of different streams are rushing along its surface, and you are sitting on the bank with a soup spoon

And you want to skim the dust and clear up the confusion! I'll move on to Trotsky's article. He assures me that he avoided all polemical tactics. He agrees, as he has already written to the editors, to formally change anything the editors deem necessary in the interests of avoiding controversy. Finally, he is far from publishing the article against the editors' wishes.

Your concerns on this score are therefore unnecessary. But I don't think the editorial board's position is any easier for that. By refusing to publish Trotsky's article, it will only create the very discord it wants to avoid, and will transform the discussion within the Central Organ into opposition to the central organ. Are the facts that have existed so far still not…

Are they convincing enough? Is it really so hard to understand that by removing an article, you're not removing the author or the views they defend, and that, in order to strengthen your point of view, you need to expose it to criticism, not avoid it?

More about a popular newspaper. I wrote above that a three-person editorial board is just right. I was referring to a large newspaper, published weekly or at least twice a month. But if the newspaper is published monthly, three editors is too many and even harmful. A newspaper absolutely cannot function without staff. And if the newspaper is small, it's impossible to divide the editorial responsibilities; there's not enough work for three, leading to constant disputes over competence, with one editor interfering with the other, and endless squabbles between the editors and the staff over whether to publish articles. Furthermore, a large newspaper boasts a rich diversity of content, while a small one relies on a selection of facts, conciseness, and consistency. It should be cast as if from a single piece—it's best entrusted to a single person.

Well then, goodbye!

Warmest greetings to Katerina Nikolaevna [Potresova], I am very sorry that we were unable to meet.

I shake hands.

Bam
Parvus.

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127. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. [Early October 1904]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich,

You write that the editors are prepared to accept articles on party tasks if they pose a fundamental question. Trotsky has repeatedly assured me that this is precisely the nature of his article, and since he also agrees in advance to any formal changes in the interests of eliminating a polemical tone, it would seem that the matter is settled. However, your letter gives me the exact opposite impression. Your letter bears the hallmark of a rupture between the editorial board, or minority—the boundaries are difficult to define—and Trotsky. Trotsky finds himself outside this circle and becomes, for those within it, something akin to an enemy of the fatherland. What is emerging is precisely what I warned against: instead of comradely discussion, a struggle between parties within the party.

This struggle is already in full swing. Your letter is the best proof. It has a completely different character than the previous one. According to the first, I should have tried to reconcile Trotsky with the editors; according to the second, Trotsky is a harmful member who, perhaps, is best cut off. Yes, yes, Alexander Nikolaevich, this may seem exaggerated to you now, but such is the tone of your letter.

The very formulation of the question: Dan-Trotsky! You list Dan's virtues to prove to me that Trotsky is wrong. I've had to fight against authority figures too often for such arguments to sway me. Here's a paradox for you, but one that nonetheless contains much truth: the workers' movement advances only through struggle against its own leaders. In any case, the cessation of opposition is always a sign of stagnation in the party. The most dangerous thing for a leader is to take criticism of the party personally.

To listen to you, Trotsky is an intriguer whose sole goal is to destroy Dan. 520 He constantly changes his views, feigns one thing and then another, remains mysteriously silent at times, avoids a direct

answer, and at the same time prepares a plan to attack from the rear. Finally, since I am extremely slow to react to Russian troubles, they translate it for me into German: Russian Chapnel!

Ah, if only Germany had Trotskys instead of the Schippels—how much life there would be in it! Youthful enthusiasm—that's what we need here most of all!

You've again chosen the Schippel example to your disadvantage. It was like this. In the Agrarian Commission, the same thing happened to Schippel as to Bebel and the others: everyone was hypnotized by the need to give the peasants "something positive." Only newspaper criticism revealed the inconsistency of all the programs that had been drafted. Schippel was immediately convinced of this and launched an attack against the very North German program for which he had voted. So, in your opinion, was he supposed to defend the program, against his own better judgment, in the interests of the board that had drawn it up?! That would have meant putting the interests of the clique above those of the party. I can assure you that the reproaches Bebel made to Schippel on this matter in Breslau by no means achieved their goal, and Bebel was nevertheless to blame for the fact that Schippel lacked the courage to declare his change of heart from the very beginning. Incidentally, Bebel himself was now recalling with regret in Bremen how—in a similar incident—Liebknecht, out of a sense of collegiality, tried to shield Schippiel on the issue of military armaments. No, we are all bound by the Party, and we cannot have Ingerses who go against the Party.

Trotsky's change of views took place before my eyes. He was casting off the eggshells of sectarian dogmatism, which sought to isolate principle, fearing harmful influences, and was moving toward political materialism, which saw in social-revolutionary principles a unifying and guiding force. If I could have had influence over him, you can be sure it would have been precisely in this direction. Of course, he is not free from the sins of youth, which dates the world from the day of its birth, itself developing, living under the impression that humanity is lagging behind. But truth is better than senile obscurity. After all, youth is not so wrong in declaring its discoveries even where it would seem to be speaking the obvious: for, digesting this something old in your brain, it gives it a new hue. And yet a new thought always appears in light, barely perceptible shades. A great truth is always an old truth, one that has grown imperceptibly and survived all sorts of troubles and alterations. Beware of the criticism: "not new." This is a barrier on the path of thought development. It is a reservation for mental flabbiness and folly. There is nothing easier than to prove that something is not new. After all, it has been proven that Marx said nothing "new," and neither did Darwin... And meanwhile, on the contrary, it is difficult for them to prove that anything is "new." Personally, I have always been convinced of the originality of my views only from the opposition that arose against them. This is a very conditional criterion, but I doubt that there is another, Trotsky's intrigues are an exaggerated trifle. If you conduct an inquisitorial investigation into every action and omission and pore over private letters, no one will be able to do anything, and you certainly won't be happy with your life.

Trotsky criticizes not Dan's personality, but his policies, which he considers extremely narrow and hindering the party's unity. He considers his influence in this direction harmful and wants to counterbalance it. Perhaps he is mistaken, in which case he needs to prove it, but he cannot be denied the right to defend his views and strive to implement them.

Ivan Nikolaevich (Martynov) was here (522). A reasonable man, a worker of the best type of organizer. He was no schemer, was he? However, in his judgments about both things and people, he agreed with Trotsky. But you (a small, collegial group - unlike you personally), of course, will find an excuse: Martyn (Rozanov] "under the influence" of Trotsky]. You still don't seem to be able to put me under Trotsky's influence, and so you have another excuse: "insufficiently informed." And you don't notice that all of this is just valves with which you cover your own eyes. You fixate on some one point and see nothing else beyond it. You subordinate the entire moral and intellectual figure to a single act of some individual - moreover, you squeeze your own thinking, your political and organizational plans, principles and tactics into this narrow channel, you try to force them through the eye of a needle in the struggle with an individual whose single act does not fit into the folds of your political understanding. In such cases, you, like black grouse on a mating mat, forget everything around you, whipping yourself up more and more into polemical fervor.

There's a centrifugal force at work within all of you, one that pushes the strong and talented aside. It's at the core of every Russian revolutionary's psyche, deepening to the point of total intolerance in many, softening and tinged with more respectable forms of human behavior in others. You repel each other as you approach, like two poles of an electric current. Of course, there must be common causes. I've thought about this more than once, and especially in recent days. We'll talk someday, but for now the facts are sufficient.

I know Lenin's mistakes, I remember them, but he was a socialist and a revolutionary—why is this valuable force wasted, or, moreover, harming the party? He himself is mostly to blame, but seeing your attitude toward others, I am beginning to come to the conclusion that Lenin is only the most striking representative of the Leninism that resides in all of you. Say what you will about Ryazanov, but he is a convinced social democrat and would undoubtedly have found a place for himself in the German party. Smirnov is a social democrat, so is Krichevsky. Nevzorov, too. Why is all this being left out in the cold? Now you are pushing Trotsky down the same path. Just now you yourselves elevated him to the leader of the minority, and now in your eyes he is merely a radical writer. These are the ones I know personally, and I know very few. Besides them, there are probably others, more or less talented Ryazanovs, Trotskys, Nevzorovs, etc. But isn’t your task to gather around you intelligent forces, conscious social democrats?

Don't forget: no matter how the revolutionary intelligentsia behaves at the moment of the revolution, the process of revolutionizing the Russian intelligentsia ends with the revolution. The revolution is near. Events are approaching. The best forces will no longer be at your disposal as they are now. The days will come when you will remember with bitterness the present time, when debates were at least conducted on the basis of scientific socialism with people whose revolutionary way of thinking could not be doubted. Access to the workers will be open, and many will enjoy success among the masses only because they speak smoothly, and they speak smoothly only because they do not ponder complex issues. The struggle against the newcomers will unite you, who have gone through the old revolutionary school. But why wait until then and, for now, pulverize the intellectual energy of the Party?

You've already wasted a whole year on internal conflicts. That's not just a waste of time, it's a year of events. The collapse of autocratic Russia is already underway in every corner. Just look at what's

happening! At this point, you can't even agree on something as simple as publishing a workers' newspaper.

By the way, it turned out exactly as Trotsky said: the entire editorial staff of the BLI rushed into the workers' newspaper, but the editorial staff did not…

I was thinking of discussing the goals of the workers' newspaper, its organization and editorial management, but the letter had already dragged on... I promised Trotsky, if he took over the editorship, to help organize the newspaper and compile the first issues. Of course, this applies to everyone else, if I had the opportunity to meet with him.

I have to abandon the article on foreign policy; I want to finish my article on "war and revolution." So, farewell! I shake your hand. Warm regards to Katerina Nikolaevna (Potresova).

By Parvus.

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128. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. [Mid-October 1904]

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

I just looked through issue No. 1 of Social Democrat (535). The articles are written interestingly, intelligibly, with dignity, preserving a principled point of view, not without fire and agitational vivacity. The newspaper will be well received by the masses and will serve its purpose. But—but still, it is only a good collection of popular articles and proclamations, not a workers' organ. It is a newspaper for workers, but not a workers' newspaper.

The newspaper's tone alone makes it clear that it was written by intellectuals for workers. You might say that's perfectly true and that you can't escape from your own skin. But that's far from the truth. To begin with, a newspaper can be written by workers and still not be a workers' newspaper. This is a frequently repeated experience wherever our Party has a broad press. The key is to be able to give political and literary expression to the needs, sentiments, and intellectual life of workers. This requires a philosophical understanding of the labor movement and literary talent. Thus, it turns out that the best representative of workers' interests is an intellectual who has gone through the school of scientific socialism and has understood the psyche of the proletariat. A writer reproduces in artistic form what he himself has not experienced, and only through literature does the reader come to know himself. So it is here. One must be able to express the thoughts of the workers. Of course, this doesn't mean—the fatal mistake of many—that we should not go beyond popular ignorance. Socialism, with all its enormous cultural work, stands in the way of the development of workers' thought. And your newspaper, besides the fact that the worker can't feel "at home" in it, that for him it is a call from above from a social democrat standing somewhere outside his circles, isn't even rich enough in content.

There are things that are difficult to describe in words, best illustrated by example. So, I'll sketch out a diagram of a newspaper as I imagine it.

I would start the newspaper directly with a political review. The point is to immediately introduce the worker to the facts of political life. Your newspaper, however, is headed by a pedagogical article on

class struggle. Take that same topic, for example—it needed to be given the character of a political editorial. Not discussions of class struggle,

And the facts of class struggle... The struggle has flared up all over the world. It has captured all countries and peoples. It is the focus of attention of all states, regardless of whether it is a republic, as in France and America, or a constitutional monarchy, or an autocracy, as in Russia. It worries Emperor Wilhelm and Tsar Nicholas alike and threatens the victorious Mikado with danger. It holds in fear all those in power, all the rich and noble. It has already cost many victims, rivers of blood have been spilled because of it, but even more Lives were lost in prisons and jails. This is the struggle of the working class against its exploiters and oppressors, the struggle of the proletariat for its liberation... And yet, what you write seems to be a justification of socialism. When you speak about socialism to so-called "society," you have to expatiate on the needs of the workers, their plight, in order to explain their struggle—the worker already knows he is in need, after all, he is the very proletarian you are talking about. Of course, you have to paint a general picture of the material situation of the proletariat, but more importantly for the worker is to show him a way out of his predicament. He needs a perspective, we need to awaken in him the political energy that his class position potentially creates in him, we need to introduce him to political life. That is why I attach such importance to political review.

In political reviews, Russia is in the foreground. And in Russia, war is now the focus of political interest. It is even being pushed into a corner... The war is mowing down thousands of people. The government does not spare the people's blood or the people's property, the following facts. - It is time to put an end to the bloodshed. Who is waging war? Not the peoples, but the ruling classes. And so on... War is a concrete fact, thoughts of war are in the minds of every worker, we must adhere to this, and the fight against autocracy is a conclusion, one of the conclusions. But your political review begins with a ready-made conclusion. A theoretical premise is established, which is then proven. Now it is clear that a man has descended from the Empire of intellectual thought to the workers. The theme: to prove to the workers the need to fight autocracy! But what is needed is: to wage the fight against autocracy on the basis of the workers' interests. If matters had been handled this way, the reprimand we've just heard probably wouldn't have occurred. It's very gratifying to hear a columnist say he intends to show how "different" freedom is and who fights for it. It would have been better, admittedly, to begin with that, rather than lining up puppets with class labels and just turning their heads in different directions—but even that's far from enough. However, as we know, even the most perfect democratic "freedom" will not give workers freedom. "Freedom"—isn't it?—is an ideological formula concealing the constitutional form of the bourgeois state. Uncovering this formula is one of our greatest tasks. It turns out, however, to be a rather awkward task: "proving" to workers the necessity of fighting for freedom and, at the same time, the deceptive nature of this freedom, whatever its form... The difficulty is resolved if we turn the question as I indicated. The class interests of workers necessitate their struggle for political rights. And from this follows: a) the need to defend these rights not only against the government, but also against the bourgeoisie; c) the necessity of using one's political rights to gain political power. Topic: Freedom, its enemies, and its defenders. Another topic: The working class, why it needs freedom and how to use it. The difference seems clear. Ego.

This is an important point. There's a gap in your newspaper's political argumentation from which murky and highly suspicious ghosts could emerge. And this despite the editorial crowd.

You, of course, know yourself that the review of political events in Russia could have been richer. Every beginning is difficult. We can't stop there. But why is there no foreign review? Two random articles about the international congress and the Italian strike don't count. A foreign review in the newspaper should constitute a corrective to the one-sided nature of the political struggle in Russia, which, by force of circumstances, is entirely timed to coincide with the overthrow of the autocracy. It would only open before Russian workers—in fact!—the broad horizons of their class struggle, would show them the so-called revolutionary process, would introduce them to the world interests of the proletariat. It would also show the complexity and diversity of the class struggle of the proletariat, etc., etc. To publish a workers' newspaper without foreign review is, in my opinion, a greater shortcoming than if it did not contain a propaganda article about the class struggle, even if the word "class struggle" was not mentioned.

A foreign review should include an overview of political events, the activities of Social Democracy, and, along with this, the trade union movement, not only strikes but also the internal life of organizations. At least brief information should be provided on sickness funds, even consumer societies, and, in general, on all forms of workers' organizational activity, their initiative, and manifestations of class independence (communal policy).

The article about the International Workers' Congress will only confuse them; the article about the Italian strike will be of very little use to them. The first article should have completely relegated the polemical part to the background—along with the congress's technicalities (voting, etc.)—in favor of emphasizing the political significance of the international unification of the proletariat. The second was supposed to provide a picture of the strike: to show how it grew and how its growth affected public opinion, how it became the center of political events, attracting the attention of the entire world, and with what extraordinary persistence, consciousness, and organizational discipline the Italian workers demonstrated. Then, of course, the newspaper should provide information on the situation of workers in Russia and abroad. Next, a section "from factories and plants." You've already taken the initiative in this, as I see from the note "To the Readers."
You might say that all this is true, but to do so would require doubling the newspaper's size, and where would we find the energy? However, I think that's wrong.

The newspaper's length is quite adequate, but the articles are too long. The first article could be cut by a good half. In the entire issue, there's only one article that fits the character of a political editorial—"War on Palaces"—and even that is a bit long.

Fewer generalities, fewer arguments, more facts. In general: facts, facts, facts! A point of view must be expressed in the selection of facts, their grouping and presentation. A newspaper must protect life. An indifferent newspaper will offer snapshots, blurred and inaccurate, of bits and corners of life, indiscriminately, like a heap of rubbish. A newspaper with a direction gives an artistic picture of life. But you present a philosophical abstraction in a popular presentation, adapted to the needs of a public school. A workers' newspaper presents facts to the worker's psyche, prepared by his class position. As a result, the worker's thoughts begin to be arranged at a certain angle. They acquire a coherent character. The worker develops a proletarian point of view. From this perspective, he views life and selects and illuminates the facts himself. This is the task of the political education of workers, very different from school pedagogy, which popularizes doctrine.

Briefly, concisely, clearly, decisively, definitely, always and in everything from life, from within it, and not about it - that is how one should write for workers.

As for the forces, I dare say that with the literary strength of Russian socialist democracy abroad, it would be possible to publish not just a weekly, but even a daily newspaper, and Iskra to boot. Under two conditions, however: organization and division of labor. That's where the secret to success, greater or lesser, lies.

I'll stop there.

What's good about you? Are you working and what are you writing?

I shake hands

By Parvus.

Heartfelt greetings to Kateryna Nikolaevna (Potresova).

R.S. Yesterday I read Trotsky's ill-fated manuscript. 326) Here is my opinion, which I immediately expressed to him: The article would needlessly irritate the majority, would sow confusion in the minority, and would make Trotsky's position impossible. I would not hesitate for a moment to reject it! Nevertheless, I cannot take back a single line of what I wrote to you on this matter. The very idea would have been impossible if we did not have the tendencies I wrote about.

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139. PARVUS-A. N. POTRESOV. 7 August 1905.

Dear Alexander Nikolaevich!

Your letter, which made me very happy, arrived at an extremely opportune time. I'll be in Switzerland in a few days. I need to meet someone in Beatenberg (near Bern) on business. I'll be there for a few days. Could you come along? Then we'll have a friendly chat and try to understand the pressing issues from the perspective of the global tasks of socialism.

I won't be making it to Geneva this time. Please inform me of your arrival by replying to my letter to the following address:

Dr. med. B. Tchlenoff
Beatenberg Kurasntalt.

I'm leaving tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

I shake hands

Your Parvus